



## fantail darter

*Etheostoma flabellare*

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Osteichthyes
Order:	Perciformes
Family:	Percidae

## Features

The fantail darter is a slender fish that grows to about two inches long. The dorsal fin is completely separated into a spiny and soft portion. The spiny portion is low and the tips of the spines form fleshy knobs in adult males. The body is sandy to brown in color with a small dark spot on each scale. The tail fin is rounded with several dark vertical bands.

## Natural History

The fantail darter is found in riffles with gravel bottoms. It may be found in shallow areas away from the main current in large streams. It has the ability to survive very low oxygen levels for short periods of time. It eats primarily midge fly larvae and other aquatic insects. Fantails spawn in spring when males establish and defend territories around rocks that are slightly raised above the stream bottom. They use their spiny dorsal fins to clean the underside of the rock and a female swims under the rock and lays about 40 eggs. A female will spawn several times, laying about 450 eggs total.

## Habitats

interior rivers and streams

## Iowa Status

common; native

## Iowa Range

eastern two-thirds of Iowa

## Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.  
*Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.